

**For Immediate Release
June 11, 2005**

**CONTACTS: John Faro
Jim Beauchesne
978-794-1655**

WORKERS' PLACE EXTENSION TO PEMBERTON PARK OPENED IN LAWRENCE HERITAGE STATE PARK

Representatives of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) gathered today with state legislators, Lawrence Mayor Michael J. Sullivan, and city officials to celebrate the opening of Workers' Place Extension to Pemberton Park, which is part of Lawrence Heritage State Park.

The long-planned, \$2.3 million project was begun in 2002, and was completed as a partnership between the state and the City of Lawrence, with support from local groups. The extension was designed by the firm of Walker/Kluesing, and greatly improves access to the Merrimack River, a tremendous but underutilized resource in Lawrence. With the opening of Workers' Place, Lawrence Heritage State Park now occupies more than 70 acres, with two large buildings under its management. Elements of this new park include walkways, a boardwalk, overlooks, irrigation, lighting, benches, trash receptacles, art components and ADA compliance.

"For generations to come, visitors to Workers' Place will be able to stroll, picnic, and enjoy community events," said DCR Director of State Parks and Recreation Priscilla Geigis. "They will also be able to sit on the benches at the park and look out over the mills that represent the proud history of this city and the thousands of immigrant mill workers who came to Lawrence to live and work here throughout the years."

Senator Susan C. Tucker congratulated those who helped make the project possible. "This dedication represents years of hard work by of a huge team of people and organizations. It is an important part of a larger vision to make the Merrimack River a centerpiece of life and recreation in Lawrence," she said.

"The rededication of Pemberton Park is another example of how Lawrence and its historic urban landscape is truly being reborn. This park holds much of Lawrence's past and now it will be a valuable part of the future of the city," said Representative David Torrisi.

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251 Causeway Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
(617) 626-1250
(617) 626-1351 FAX
www.mass.gov/dcr

MITT ROMNEY
Governor

KERRY HEALEY
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The rededication event was part of the annual Family Fiesta and Kite Fest, organized by Family Service, Inc. and Groundwork Lawrence, two long-time non-profit partners of Lawrence Heritage State Park.

“As Mayor of the City of Lawrence, I feel we are fortunate to have such a wonderful state park system that includes Pemberton Park. This \$2 million expansion will provide even greater urban recreational opportunities for the citizens of Lawrence to enjoy a little respite by the beautiful Merrimack River,” said Lawrence Mayor Michael J. Sullivan.

During the ceremonies, new artwork for the park was unveiled – bronze medallions which depict passport stamps representing various ethnic groups that have lived and worked in Lawrence, building the city’s reputation as “Immigrant City.” The medallions will be hung in the Passport Pavilion at the entrance to the new Workers’ Place.

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